

The museum project of surgical instruments collection at Ceppo Hospital, Pistoia

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The museum project collection of surgical strumentaria is part of the overall plan to build a museum at the monumental historical sector of Ceppo hospital, an health institution among the oldest in Tuscany. This project is part of a wider museum display program of healthcare institutions' historical and artistic heritage promoted by the Tuscany Region.

The collection of surgical instruments of Pistoia hospital was born with the School of Surgery in 1666, having acknowledge news from 1689.

The activities and the success of the School, however, were shadowed soon by the rise of the Florentine School of Surgery; especially since 1754, when Francesco Stefano di Lorena restricts Pistoia hospital teaching to training for surgical field only.

From a Report sponsored by the Gran Duke Pietro Leopoldo in 1776 we learn that, at this moment, the only available surgical strumentaria was that for delivery and anatomy practice. This last discipline, in fact, comes to represent the main educational prerogative of the institution as evidenced by the anatomical theater, still one of the best preserved anatomy theaters in Europe.

The collection of historical strumentaria consists of approximately 270 pieces including comprehensive tools and accessories representing the field of science and educational activities carried out over the centuries. Consequently, the choice of the exhibition sequence of scientific historical articles serves as primary support to the understanding of the hospital complex genesis, evolution and structural relief. Problems of security and protection suggest to maintain the current unity of place of the collection, while avoiding the dismemberment of the corpus in multiple environments. Indeed, the project only includes a sectoral dislocation to the Anatomical Theatre for instruments more pertinent to practical anatomy (saws and scalpels, scissors, trocars). The corpus of instruments will be selected taking into account the different specialist disciplines with particular emphasis on the areas of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Urology that, beyond their being among the oldest medical specialties, represent the most numerous and ancient specimens of the Pistoia collection.

The museum project will develop through two main, different lines of intervention:

- 1) a 'celebration' – more static –line refers to the exaltation of those events and personalities of the past who have prominently influenced the history of the institution;
- 2) a more dynamic line specifically tied to the scientific object, its technical characteristics, use and evolution.

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